

Congresswoman Betty McCollum delivered the following statement on the House floor in support of H.R. 3999, The National Highway Bridge Reconstruction and Inspection Act:

Madam Chair, I rise in support of H.R. 3999, the National Highway Bridge Reconstruction and Inspection Act.

Nearly one year ago, Minnesota made the national news when our community lost a bridge, and so much more.

In the wake of a heroic rescue effort in Minneapolis, this Congress responded with an emergency federal appropriation to rebuild the bridge.

Today our community is healing, and the new bridge is nearly complete.

But August 1, 2007 must not be about one bridge in Minnesota.

Our state's tragedy was evidence of America's desperate problem.

Today, the Congress is rightly and responsibly turning to the task of repairing and maintaining thousands of deficient bridges across this country.

We are making a commitment to remove one unnecessary worry from the everyday lives of America's families.

Today's vote is about investing in the public good.

Today's vote is about protecting public safety.

And today's vote is about restoring a public trust that remains badly broken.

I commend Chairman Oberstar – the dean of the Minnesota delegation – for bringing this bill to the floor, and for his strong leadership on transportation policy.

I look forward to continuing to work with the Chairman during reauthorization next year when we begin to build a 21st century transportation system for America.